

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Department of Health



May 5, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As you may have seen in the news the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have identified a new virus, H1N1 Influenza, also known as swine flu, in the United States. The CDC expects to find more cases in the United States and we are monitoring the situation in the District and across the country closely. H1N1 is a disease that is easily spread from person to person. There are simple steps that you and your children can take to prevent the spread of this flu virus and other diseases.

Cover your cough and sneezes to help stop germs from entering the air:

- Ideally you should cough or sneeze into a disposal tissue.
- If you do not have a disposable tissue, you can cough or sneeze into the elbow of your sleeves, not into your hands.
- After coughing or sneezing, you should wash your hands with soap and water.

Frequent hand washing prevents the transfer of diseases:

- Use soap and water, lathering well above the wrists and rub your hands together for at least 15-20 seconds.
- A good way to make sure your children are scrubbing their hands for the right amount of time is to sing the Happy Birthday or Row, Row, Row Your Boat songs twice.
- Once you are finished scrubbing rinse and dry your hands.
- Hand sanitizers are a good temporary solution, but should not replace washing hands with soap and water.

If your child should develop any symptoms of the flu, such as feeling tired, cough, runny nose, sore throat and a temperature of 100 degrees or higher it is important that you keep him/her at home and contact your healthcare provider to obtain a medical evaluation.

Should you have any questions or concerns, Department of Health at 311 or if you are calling from a non DC number 202-737-4404.

Sincerely,

Dr. Pierre Vigilance
Director, Department of Health